



Department of Justice

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ORANGEBURG COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA COUNCIL CHAIRMAN INDICTED
ON PUBLIC CORRUPTION CHARGES

WASHINGTON – The chairman of the Orangeburg, South Carolina, County Council has been indicted by a federal grand jury on charges of bribery concerning programs receiving federal funds and extortion under color of official right, Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney Reginald I. Lloyd of the District of South Carolina announced today.

The two-count indictment charges that 54-year-old Rickenbacker, who was elected to the Orangeburg County Council and later succeeded to the position of Chairman of the Council, solicited and received bribes totaling \$50,000 between December 2005 and May 2006. According to the indictment, which was returned on June 21, 2006 and unsealed today, the payments were made by an undercover FBI agent posing as a consultant to a company interested in acquiring the Regional Medical Center of Orangeburg and Calhoun Counties. In exchange for the money, the indictment alleges that Rickenbacker agreed to provide the undercover FBI agent with a copy of a valuation report analyzing the financial condition of the hospital. The report was being prepared at the request of the Orangeburg County Council and would assist the company as it prepared to bid on the hospital. According to the indictment, Rickenbacker also indicated he would provide the necessary political support to get the sale approved by the Orangeburg County Council.

The maximum penalty Rickenbacker could receive on the bribery count is 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. The maximum penalty on the extortion charge is 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000.

All charges in the indictment are merely accusations and all defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

The case was investigated by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and South Carolina State Law Enforcement Division, and has been assigned to Assistant U.S. Attorney Winston D. Holliday, Jr., of the U.S. Attorney's Office in South Carolina for prosecution. The case is being prosecuted jointly by Trial Attorney Eileen Gleason of the Criminal Division's Public Integrity Section.

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